

**REMARKS**

Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-20 are in the application. Claims 1, 6 and 20 have been amended.

In the Official Action, the Examiner objected to the Specification for failing to include a "Brief Description of the Drawings". The Examiner's attention is drawn to page 5 of Applicants' Specification, starting at line 13, where a description of the figures is provided. To clearly point out this section, this Specification has been amended to include section headings before and after this section. It is respectfully submitted that the Specification, as amended, is in accord with U.S. practice.

The Examiner rejected claims 1 and 20 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being allegedly indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicants regard as the invention. Specifically, the Examiner asserted that the phrase "a metal is firstly precipitated from the salt solution" is "somewhat confusing and appears to be inaccurate because the specification appears to disclose the precipitation of a metal hydroxide from the salt solution but not the claimed metal". A similar assertion regarding claim 20 was also raised. In response, claims 1 and 20 have been amended to indicate that a metal hydroxide is firstly precipitated from the salt solution, not a metal. It is respectfully submitted that the claims, as amended, are in accord with 35 U.S.C. §112.

The Examiner rejected claims 1-20 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being allegedly anticipated by Talbot et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,385,671).

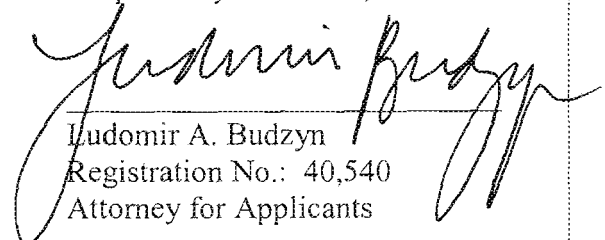
Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Talbot et al. is directed to a method of magnesium hydroxide recovery from a mixture of particulate magnesium hydroxide and dissolved sodium sulphate in water. This mixture is initially held in a reaction/wash tank 14. (Col. 2, ll. 21-27). To separate the magnesium hydroxide particles from the dissolved sodium sulphate, the mixture is pumped through an ultrafiltration module consisting of two filtration banks of 16, 18 arranged in parallel. (Col. 2, ll. 28-35). As clearly shown in Fig. 1, the filtered permeate is released to drain after passing through the filter banks 16, 18. Only the recovered magnesium hydroxide is transferred back to the wash tank 14 or is transferred to an adjusting tank when the process is terminated. (See, Fig. 1; Col. 3, ll. 13-20).

Both claims 1 and 20 require the permeate to be fed, through a cross-flow filtration installation or unit. In contrast, Talbot et al. discards the permeate, rather than applying the permeate to further filtration for the permeate. There is no disclosure or suggestion in Talbot et al. of such additional filtration. It is respectfully submitted that claims 1 and 20, along with dependent claims 2-19, are patentable over Talbot et al.

Favorable action is earnestly solicited. If there are any questions or if additional information is required, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Applicants' attorney at the number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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